

Michigan Association of School Nurses (MASN)
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 4865
Legislation establishing oversight of mobile dental facilities

October 15, 2013

Good Morning, Chairwoman Haines and committee members, my name is Ronda Harrison and I am here today as the President of the Michigan Association of School Nurses (MASN), to express our strong support of HB 4865, legislation establishing oversight of mobile dental facilities.

School nurses are aware of the serious nature of oral disease, its prevalence among school children, its impact on education and the need for improved dental hygiene services and education on oral health for many Michigan families.

Professional mobile dental services are an important resource for families that, for various reasons, do not have an established dental home or don't attend to their children's need for oral health care services. HB 4865 ensures that the standards and safeguards which govern the provision of services in permanent office settings are also applied to mobile dental facilities. HB 4865 also addresses issues unique to student care via mobile dental facilities, which is the focus of my comments.

School nurses often act as 'case finders,' identifying children needing oral health care. We initiate mobile dental services, coordinate care and communication between providers, parents and the schools. Without systematic coordination, a child's oral health care can be compromised, delayed or go untreated altogether. Confusion and delays also further burden struggling families and our often under-resourced schools, and waste precious oral health care resources.

Some examples include:

- Parents have contacted me when they could not reach the dentist, find a written report of dental needs, or obtain copies of their child's x-rays.

- I have seen instances where a student needed more work than could be managed in one sitting.
- Pizza parties have been used as a reward system for classrooms returning the most completed permission forms.
- Mobile units have been scheduled months in advance of known time requirements for care.

As you can see from these examples, coordination of services and helping parents follow-up on their child's care is a time-consuming task, and difficult enough for schools with a school nurse. The regulatory framework provided by HB 4865 is even more necessary because of the lack of access to school nursing services in Michigan. Michigan ranks dead last in the nation in the ratio of school nurses to students. Given these circumstances, we urge your support of HB 4865 and your continued attention to meeting the oral health care needs of students in Michigan.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Ronda Harrison RN, BSN, NCSN

President MASN

michiganschoolnurses@gmail.com